



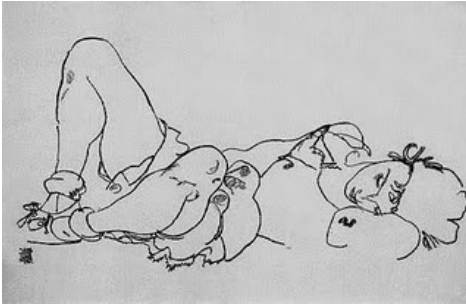
50 wOmeN

Tom Corrado

... woman ... driving me crazy.
- Alan Bates to Jill Clayburgh in
An Unmarried Woman (1978)

Woman I

Her legs encircle my dreams.
There's so much mystery
I keep losing my place.
The morning coffee barks
and the dogs perk.
I am beside myself.
I think of coupons.
Midday, I twirl,
and have taken up ventriloquism
at the local mannequin shelter.



Lying by Egon Schiele

Woman II

She appears as my waitress
and critiques my penmanship.
I give her my order
but she returns
empty-handed
then leaves
with the short-order cook.
Driving home
I can't get her reflection
out of my rearview mirror.



Stella Tennant

Woman III

And she can be monochromatic
in a colorful way
trumping cards
unceremoniously
while edging forward in her seat
to expose her hand.
Her whimsy attracts bees
and keeps acquaintances at bay.
Grocery clerks love
to check her out.



Lily Cole

Woman IV

She calls me Ishmael
and choreographs
a dance from the pages
of *Moby Dick*.
Her costumes mimic
the South Seas.
Her toenails
are the color of whales.
I experience restless legs.



Woman V

She's had sidemen
multi-instrumentalists
whose virtuosity
I've been told
is unparalleled.
And she can solo as well
with the best:
head back
eyes half-closed
unfocused
conjuring sounds
from composition books
not sold in schools.



Woman VI

She loves to fly standby
and make the most of it
tantalizing others
with word-of-mouth
and instructions
for otherworldly delights.
Her movements are pivotal
to her role
as understudy.



Woman VII

Candles brighten my off-sides.
The book staring at me
from across the room
may as well read itself.
I've bought loafers to save time
and put pennies in them.
Her words swell my pockets.
My keyboard is tongue-tied.
I brew tea and read the bag.
Strolling through
a Japanese garden
hand-in-hand
appears on my grocery list.



Kate Moss by Chuck Close

Woman VIII

She conducts symphonies
and directs traffic
and swallows swords
with arresting delicacy.
Security gives her a headache
and a wide berth.
Cars rubberneck.
Busy intersections wait
for her to cross.



Woman IX

I live on the edge
of her bus stop
and dream of her
hand-me-downs.
My iPad replays her moves.
My eyes caress
her full red lips
and pierced tongue.
I am stuck
in her infinite loop.



Woman X

Her hair is the color
of infidelity.
Her legs speak
in tongues.
I sit on a stoop
and count my toes
morphing into
an elderly gent
with graying tufts
sprouting
from both ears.
I am spellbound
by her apps.
My shoes
keep switching feet.



Woman XI

Her harmonics
fill the practice rooms
and hallways
and the spaces
between my days
when she's on the road
traveling
to her next gig.



Zoe Keating

Woman XII

Feeding on her every word
I retire to my room
to compose a sonnet
laced with nesting doves.
She appears on my screen
and casts bittersweets
onto the stones beneath my window.
I am breathless
with second guesses.



Woman XIII

She is awed
by the Great Houdini
and trawls eBay
for handcuffs and leg irons.
I become animated
after calling her cell



Rie Rasmussen

Woman XIV

I browse the stacks for lines
and wear my best shirt.
Every picture bears her resemblance.
A stray gives me direction.
I practice in front of a mirror
but the image is someone else.
My pen runs away.
My index cards go blank.
I arrange them in her likeness.



Woman XV

She can whistle
in three-part harmony
and keep five balls
in the air.

The words *free agent* are tattooed
in Garamond on her inner thigh.
I am lost
in her flurry of *Post-its*.



Woman XVI

Her voice spellbinds me
like the sound of a cello
note for note
measure upon measure
leading me through a maze
of fantasies
before releasing me
into the morning commute.
My GPS jams.



Frances Marie Uitti

Woman XVII

She enters my dream
through a side door
a blues harp player
in snakeskin boots
and weathered jeans.
Getting out of bed
I slip on a musical note.



Kim Addonizio

Woman XVIII

She has the moves
and is especially ruthless
with knights.

Entranced by her play,
I give up my pawn
en passant.



Sandrine Bonnaire

Woman XIX

I lose my remote
in the excitement
of her cookware.
Thumbing through recipes
I find a photograph of her
as a marionette
lounging among cushions
in a room filled
with parsed sentences.
I reach for my cutting board
to capture her strings.



Chloe Sevigny

Woman XX

I google her and watch
the hits scroll
She tickets me
for overtime
then removes
her uniform and gloves
which inflate
to cartoonish proportion.
They squeeze me
out of the room
as she enters the bath
where her nipples sparkle
like uncut stars.



Woman XXI

She writes me into
her short story:
a walk-on
with one line
from Wittgenstein:
What is thinkable is possible.
I blow it.



Woman XXII

I sample the flavors of her 33 1/3
angularity.

Her tight typeface
wallpapers my memory
stopping me mid-sentence.

My iPad takes the wheel.



Marine Vaeth

Woman XXIII

She strikes a pose
in life drawing class.
I forget the model.



Luisa Bianchin

Woman XXIV

She friends the God of Doors,
looks forward and back
texts stage directions in triplicate.
The curtain rises.
I fantasize her
costume changes,
and lose myself
in her unnumbered addenda.



Saskia de Brauw

Woman XXV

She practices cursive
at the deli counter.
I forget why I'm standing in line.



Corrado Amati

Woman XXVI

Her every sentence is a mini-pose
as she fills her eyes with world-weariness
while twirling her vintage-y skirt.
I record her narcissisms,
and can't wait to get into her archive.



Kate Bosworth

Woman XXVII

She opens with a quote
closes with someone else
uses a compass
to stay en pointe.
I flip through my Rolodex
for her stats.
My paradigm shifts
into overdrive.



Woman XXVIII

Slam-dunked
by her ____*
I am struck speechless
unable to call foul.

*beauty/glare/indifference/smile/words



Joyce Tenneson

Woman XXIX

Silk blouse askew
hair wilding
she is Everywoman
moving
with the ease of a danseuse
along the row where I sit,
mummified.



Woman XXX

She reads Rilke before counting sheep
splits wood in the afternoon
can change the oil in her pickup
faster than Jiffy Lube.
I open an account at Carhartt.



Woman XXXI

She takes in the exhibits
with Modigliani's eyes
unslinging her SLR
to capture the intimacies
in the maze of back galleries.



Woman XXXII

Standing next to her
in the elevator
I am enveloped by her scent.
I miss my floor.



Charlotte Gainsbourg

Woman XXXIII

Seeing her in a trailer
for the sequel to
The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo
I capture a still
and save it . . . somewhere?



Woman XXXIV

Her strappy heels
leave messages
on my answering machine.



Woman XXXV

She eats waffles
with a cartographer's
exactitude
mapping each piece
with the compass of her mouth.
I become lost
in her topography.



Woman XXXVI

She consorts with puppets
in a room filled with bobby-soxers
where she is subjected
to the free passes
of agents
who feign muteness
to fake Stradivari's signature
while playing stoop-ball
with bassoonists smoking joints.



Woman XXXVII

She pores over Kafka's words,
muttering something about
an *unreliable narrator*,
tells me he never read ads
because he didn't want to want.
She quotes him and says
*a book should serve as an ax
for the frozen sea within us.*
We become vegans.
She calls me *Gregor*.



Irma Haselberger

Woman XXXVIII

She crosses her Ts
and her legs
and dots her eyes
with innuendo.
She has mastered
the art of wordlessness.
Seeing her
in a summer dress,
I am born again.



Woman XXXIX

She says she wants to ride
and pulls up on her Harley.
I roll my Schwinn
back into the garage.



Woman XL

Like Carl Jung on the racquetball court
she drops archetypes
into the airspace between swings
eyeing me through the handcuffs
of her pink-tinged goggles
while adjusting the shiny black Lycra tubes
encasing her cardio'd and tanned thighs.
I am singed by a sizzling serve,
bug-eyed, hyperventilating,
and down for the mandatory eight,
sucking a vitamin-stuffed
antioxidant energy drink
laced with enough omega-3 and ginseng
to keep all NFL linebackers
for the next 50-plus years
happy and healthy and erect,
as the bell steps in
to save me from total annihilation.



Woman XLI

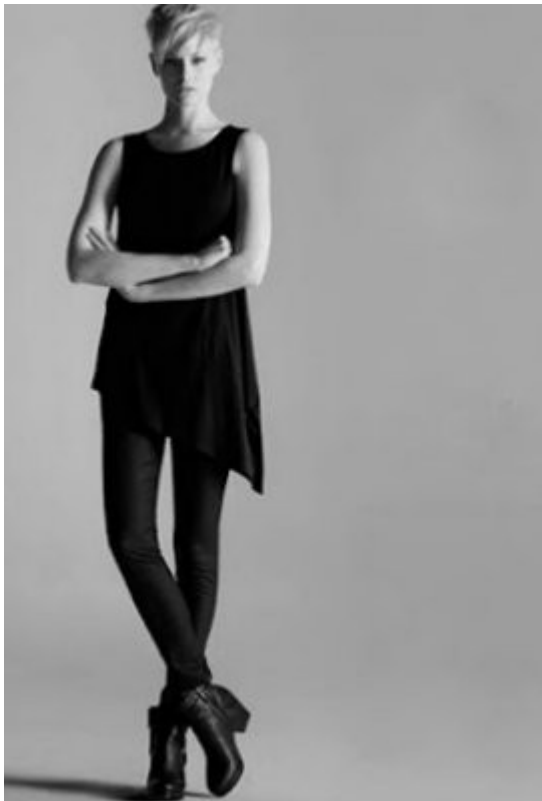
Twining psychological insight
with anthropological acumen
she nails my motives
leaving me curbside catching my breath.



Abbey Lee Kershaw

Woman XLII

She says she'll be wearing a tunic.
I think Lawrence of Arabia.



Woman XLIII

Her password-protected entry
emails invitations
to insignificant others.
I fancy myself an algorithm.



Diego Indraccolo

Woman XLIV

A tit for a tat... imagine that
purred the cat... listening to Bird
parse *Ornithology*.



Peter Yang

Woman XLV

Instead of sleep
I scan images of her
costumed
dancing
my finger blue
from swiping the screen.



Katerina Plotnikova

Woman XLVI

Costumed for night
she saves her literary lollipops
for footnotes
and phony phone numbers
floating in her wake . . .
her long legs spanning
one and a half sidewalk cracks.



Gisele Bündchen

Woman XLVII

Wearing underclothing out
she bottlenecks bridges
during rush hour
with her player-piano un-poses.
I jaywalk.



Paolo Roversi

Woman XLVIII

Her wherewithal has caught on
with post-coital interviewers
who strike out at double-headers
where triple plays are as commonplace
as nosebleeds.



Irma Haselberger

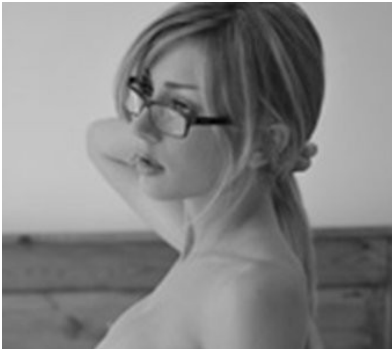
Woman XLIX

The sound of her anklet
in the darkness
hundreds of miles away
awakens me.



Woman L

And then she says ... *I want to clown around
and around ... and around ... and take that
out ... and put that in ... Favorite color? ..
. three ... I enjoy variations on that theme .
.. don't you? ... especially in A minor ...
I've told you that in the summer I sometimes
do ... and I sometimes do not ... I will only
respond to emails from endangered species ..
. a cigarette? ... never ... of course I've
tried that ... and that too ... and three ...
and four ... I was there, you know ... in the
wings ... with wings ... poetry is TMI ...
courting poor taste? ... we are all
collapsible ... combustible ... collateral ..
. a contextualist? ... a constructivist? ...
blah blah blah ... I am consumed by the
game ... I am costumed for the game ... I am
the game ... of chance ... of choice ... your
choice ... your move ... P-QN4 ...*





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Black Haired Girl by Egon Schiele
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